

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor|

The Anti-Semitism Monitor

December 2010

About the Anti-Semitism Monitor

This is the second issue of the Anti-Semitism Monitor. I release editions regularly, to keep you apprised of my activities, and trends and developments I observe as I fulfill my responsibilities as President Obama's Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism. I encourage you to stay in touch with me, and I welcome your thoughts and contributions.

ICCA Conference on Anti-Semitism

Parliamentarians from over 50 countries participated in the Interparliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism Conference in Ottawa, Canada in November. This conference follows the successful 2009 London Conference, where the London Declaration on Combating Anti-Semitism was signed by lawmakers from around the world.

I joined US Congressman Chris Smith in representing the United States at the ICCA conference, and Rep. Smith is an international leader in the organization. The conference focused on governments' role in combating anti-Semitism.

Many sessions focused on how to confront hate speech, especially on the internet, without infringing on freedom of speech and expression. The lawmakers shared best practices and hard challenges they face in their countries, and helped each other strategize to remove barriers to success in combating anti-Semitism. The Anti Defamation League provided a powerful display on the resilience of anti-Semitism and the lies of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Ukrainian Parliamentarian Oskar Feldman brought a visual presentation on Babi Yar, the most famous of the extensive mass graves in Ukraine.



Special Envoy Rosenthal addresses parliamentarians from over 50 countries at the ICCA Conference on Anti-Semitism. (Photo: anti-sem.org)

Recording History, Providing Evidence, Bearing Witness: Father Patrick Desbois

When Patrick Desbois was 12 years old, he saw images of the Holocaust in a library in Chalon,

France, and it changed his life forever. Now living in Paris, and Secretary to the French Conference of Bishops, Father Desbois is not only an advisor to the Vatican on the Jewish religion, but he has established Yahad In Unum Association – which researches archival history, records testimonies, and interviews people in small communities throughout the former Soviet Union to find and honor those Jews who were murdered and left in unmarked mass graves.

He has already identified almost 1000 such mass graves, and estimates that the lives ended in those previously unknown graves number over 1.5 million. Before the “Final Solution” built deportation and extermination systems, millions of Jews were murdered by Nazis and local collaborators, one by one, family by family, at close range.

We all owe Father Desbois a debt of gratitude for his tireless work of bearing witness to this dark chapter of history and for helping all the world know truth of this part of Holocaust history. I had the honor of meeting Father Desbois recently and will definitely follow his work closely.



Father Patrick Desbois being shown an unmarked mass grave in Ukraine (Photo: Wsj.net)

Confronting Holocaust Denial: Ireland

In Ireland I attended an intensive academic conference on anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. Scholars included Mark Weitzman, Robert Wistrich, Christian Wiese, Meir Litvak, Zuleika Rodgers, Jeffrey Herf, Tony Kushner, Elhanan Yakira, Werner Bergmann, Pierre Birnbaum, Deborah Lipstadt, Esther Webman, Juliane Wetzel, Robert Jan van Pelt, and Bassam Tibi.

These scholars outlined a number of disturbing trends, including the growth of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial as a tool of militant Islamist groups, and the subtle ways that Holocaust denial is spread and legitimized through the Internet.



Visiting the Jewish museum in Dublin, Ireland with US Embassy officer Karyn Posner-Mullen and local Jewish leaders Marilyn Taylor and Debbie Briscoe.

USCIRF: Our partner in fighting for religious freedom around the world

I had the opportunity to meet with many of the USCIRF commissioners and staff to explore ways we can work together to monitor and combat anti-Semitism.

Their work is complementary to the work of our IRF office at the State Department, as they are a separate commission appointed by the White House and Congressional leadership. We identified many opportunities for collaborations, and I look forward to working with them as we all prepare for 2011.

The USCIRF commissioners are Leonard Leo, Dr. Don Argue, Dr. Elizabeth Prodromou, Iman Talal Eid, Felice Gaer, Dr. Richard Land, William Shaw, Nina Shea, and Ted Van Der Meid. The Executive Director is Ambassador Jackie Wolcott.

Alan Gross: Trying to assist the Cuban Jewish Community

A year ago, December 3rd, Alan Gross was arrested in Havana. He has still not been charged with any wrong-doing, and the State Department continues to use all diplomatic tools at our disposal to gain his release.

Gross, a specialist in international development, was arrested while on a contract with USAID to bring technology to the rather isolated Jewish community in Havana, to better connect them with information and communities outside of Cuba. Since his incarceration, Gross has lost 90 pounds and his health is deteriorating.

Alan's case is still open in Cuba, as we, and many other countries, are appealing to the Cuban government to immediately release him on urgent humanitarian grounds. State Department spokesman Philip Crowley stated, "We have made it very clear to the Cuban Government that the continued detention of Alan Gross is a major impediment to advancing the dialogue between our two countries."

International Human Rights Day

On December 10th, International Human Rights Day, we participated in many activities commemorating human rights work around the world. I spoke to the RUMI Forum about interfaith responsibility to confront anti-Semitism. The RUMI forum fosters interfaith and intercultural dialogue, and provides a common platform for education and information exchange.

On behalf of President Obama, Secretary Clinton, Assistant Secretary Michael Posner and the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor honored four outstanding human rights activists for their tireless efforts advancing freedom and equality. They were Sarah Cleto Rial, the program director for My Sister's Keeper, Wade Henderson, President and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; and a posthumous award to Professor Louis Henkin, Chairman of the Center for the Study of Human Rights at Colombia University. An award was also given to Alice Henkin for her tireless work to advance human rights.

And the Bureau held a town hall meeting on international human rights, in which Secretary Clinton spoke about the important partnership of civil society and governments to advance rights for all.

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Remarks from 2010 Conference on Anti-Semitism:

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/rm/2010/150920.htm>

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